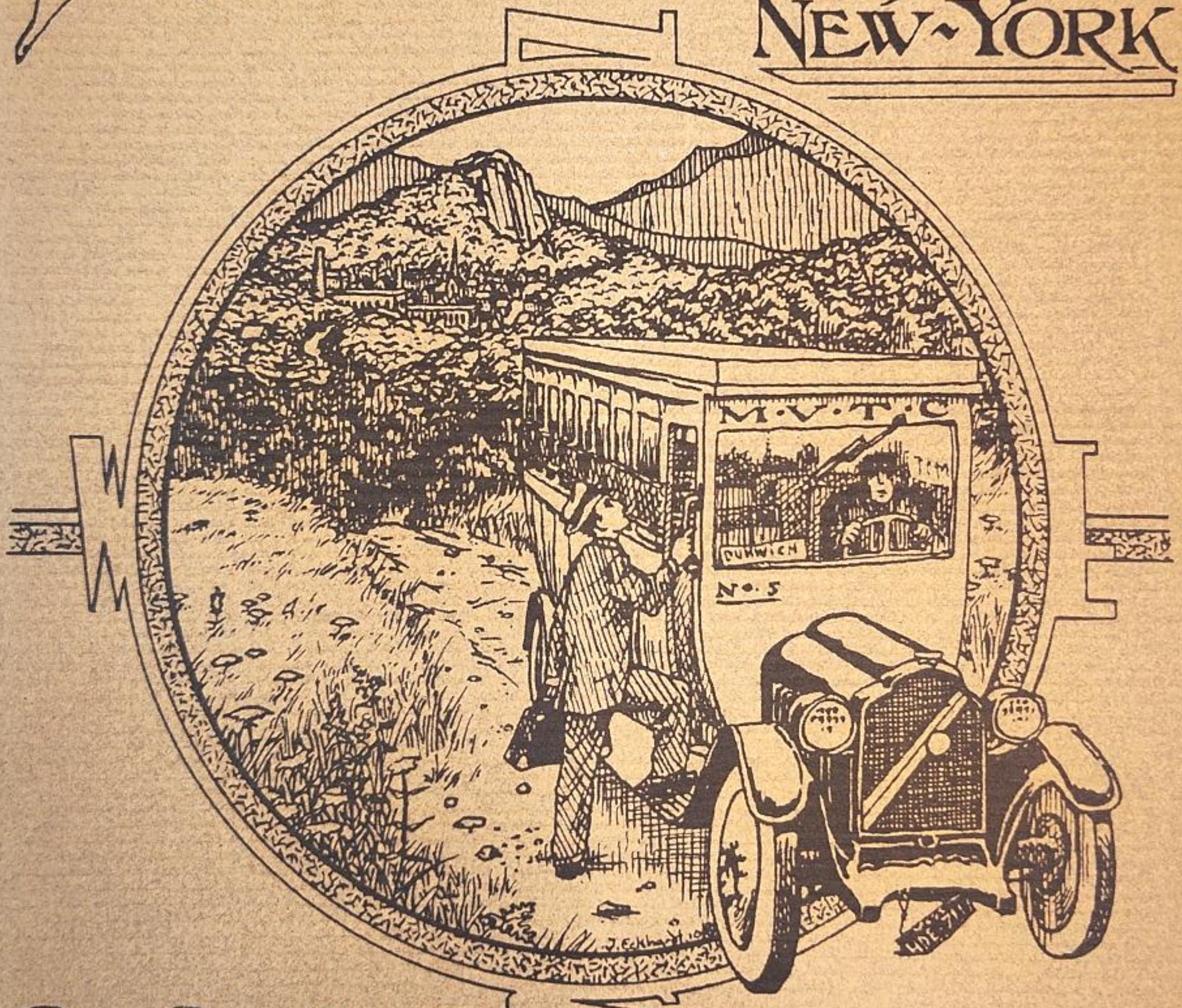
OFF THE ANCIENT TRACK

A LOVECRAFTIAN GUIDE TO NEW-ENGLAND & ADJACENT NEW-YORK



2·0·1·3 EDITION

BY

JASON C. ECKHARDT

ILLUSTRATED

Off the Ancient Track

A Lovecraftian Guide to New-England and Adjacent New-York, 2013 Edition

Written and Illustrated by
Jason C. Eckhardt

JASON C. ECKHARDT

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This is dedicated to Marc, old and dear friend, without whom the journey would never have started.

Preface

Many years have elapsed since I first created OFF THE ANCIENT TRACK, and what a time it's been. When I first put this booklet together, there were no such things as GPS or online maps, which begs the question: Is there still a need for such a thing as a print guidebook?

I think there is. For one thing, I have received many requests for a new printing of this book from many well-meaning people over the years. On a more basic level, there is something intrinsically comforting about being able to hold a book in your hand and to leaf back through the pages to look at that certain map or image one more time. Electronic media have yet to duplicate that feeling.

Those who own previous editions of this booklet will note some changes. I have redrawn the images based upon my originals, and redrawn the maps of Providence and New York as well. The most major changes in the maps are the moving of Rt. 195 in Providence and the new Rt. 93 tunnel in Boston-the infamous "Big Dig". Also, I have included a couple new maps, replacing my old map of "The Northeast" with one of "Massachusetts and Environs." Lest I be accused of geocentrism (I am a Bay State native and resident), it seemed to me that much of the action in Lovecraft's major stories is set in or close to Massachusetts. The sacrifice of such passing locales as Chesuncook, Maine, and the Winooski River, VT., is offset by more detail in the new map. For supplements to OTAT I recommend the Moon Metro books for the cities, and DeLorme's excellent series of state atlases for the countryside. May the road roll out before you to new discoveries.

Jason C. Eckhardt, Feb. 2013.

Abbreviations

AM-At the Mountains of Madness
CA-Cool Air
CC-The Call of Cthulhu
CS-The Colour out of Space
CW-The Case of Charles Dexter Ward
DH-The Dunwich Horror
F-The Festival
HD-The Haunter of the Dark
HW-Herbert West-Reanimator
HPL-H.P.Lovecraft
PM-Pickman's Model
RH-The Horror At Red Hook
SH-The Shunned House
SI-The Shadow Over Innsmouth
ST-The Shadow Out of Time
TD-The Thing on the Doorstep
WD-The Whisperer in Darkness

Providence and Environs.

If New England is the center of Lovecraft's universe, then Providence is its epicenter. Rich in history spanning over 350 years, Providence rewards the curious with a wealth of historical sites. And the good news for Lovecraftians is that much that HPL knew and loved still lingers in the old town. Three of his homes still stand, Benefit Street (a slum in his day) is even lovelier than he knew it, and one can even still take "the Newport boat" that Prof. Angell did in "The Call of Cthulhu"! In addition to the College Hill and Providence sites in the following maps, below are some others that may be of interest.

—The John Brown House, 52 Power St.-headquarters of the RI Historical Society. Repository of RI treasures and home of John Brown, one of the conspirators who defeated Curwen (CW).

88 Benefit Street: former home of Sarah Helen Whitman, Providence poet courted by Poe in the 1840s.

-161 Benefit Street-former home of Franklin C. and Lillian D. Clark, HPL's uncle and aunt.

-187 Benefit Street-former site of Horace B. Knowles Funeral Home, where HPL' s funeral was held.

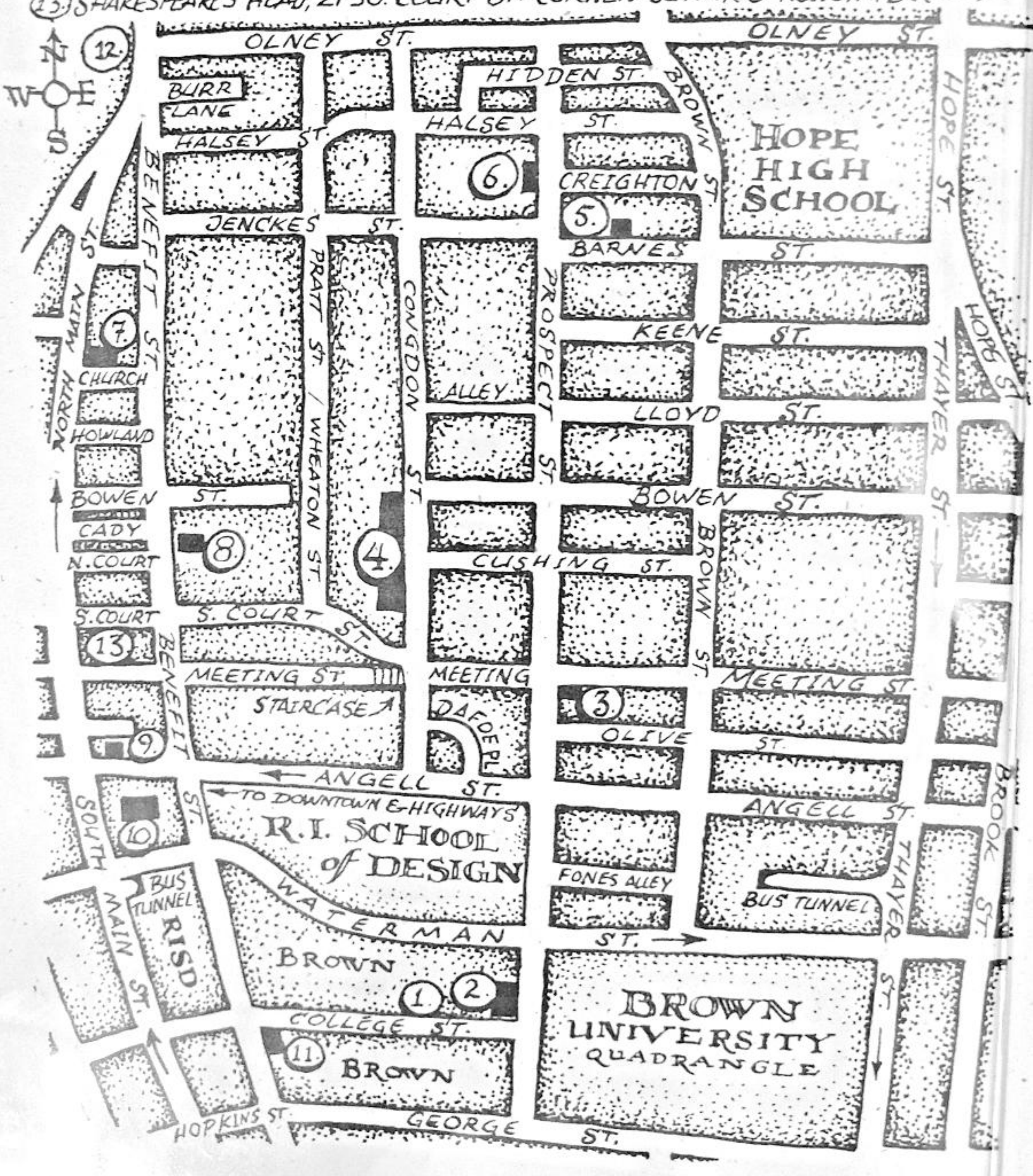
-Hope Street High School-while the original school that HPL attended no long stands, it was directly across the street from the present school.

-Pawtuxet, Cranston-site of Curwen's Farm (CW). Follow the path of Curwen's enemies and Dr. Willett: take Broad Street south from downtown approx. three miles. Take a left on Lockwood St. and walk downhill to the river. There is a path here in Pawtuxet State Park which follows the river to the right, to the bluff below Dallas St., possible basis for the Farm.

-Neutaconkanut Hill, Johnston, and Lincoln Woods-Quinsnicket, Lincoln-HPL was a famous walker and these two destinations prove it. As you drive to them, consider HPL walking all that way through rural Rhode Island scenes.

COLLEGE · HILL

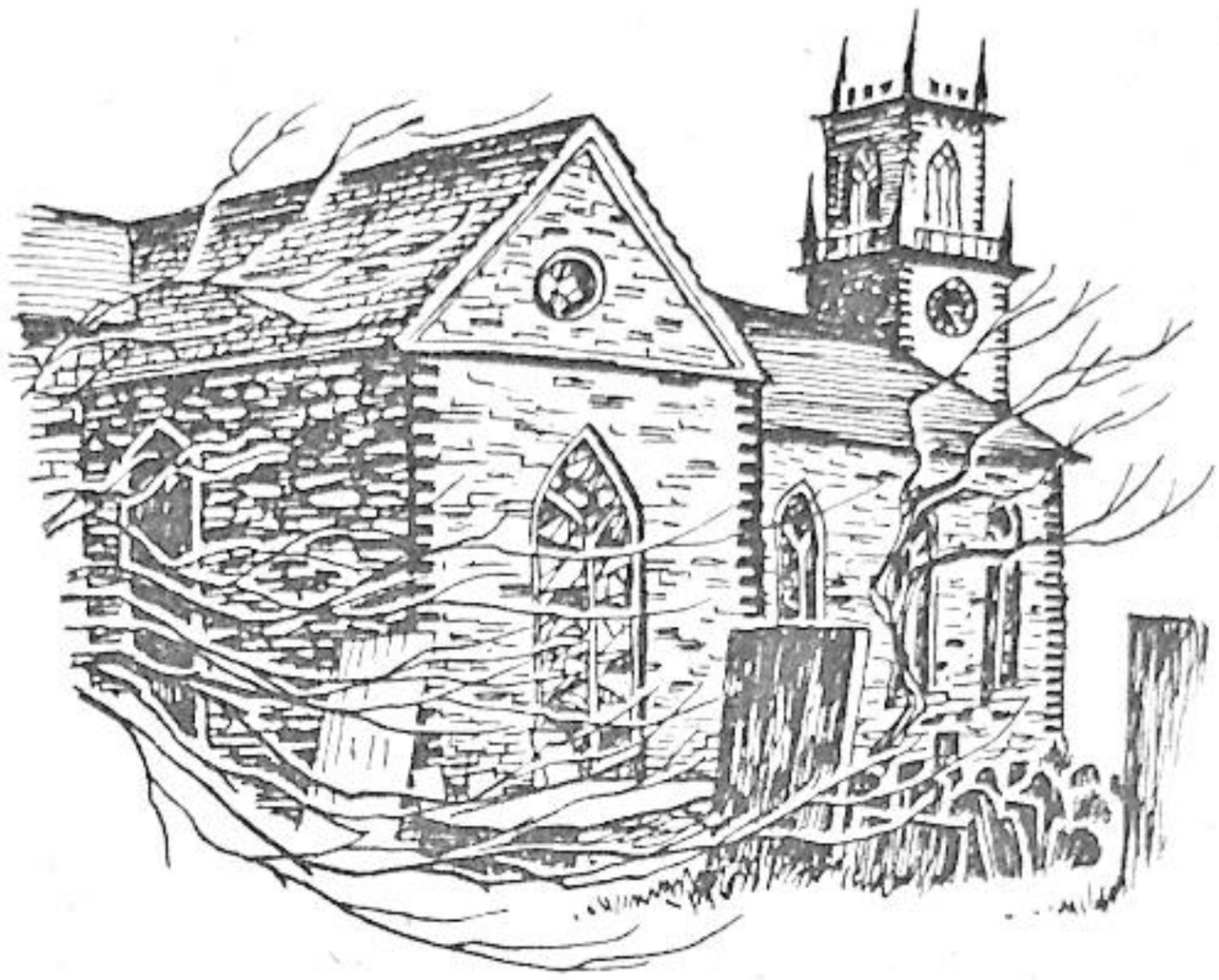
1. 66 COLLEGE ST. - FORMER SITE OF HPL'S LAST HOME, 1933-37.
2. JOHN HAY LIBRARY, BROWN U. - REPOSITORY OF HPL'S PAPERS.
3. 65 PROSPECT ST. - HPL'S LAST HOME - MOVED TO 66 COLLEGE.
4. PROSPECT TERRACE - FAVORITE VIEW OF HPL, AND WARD (CW).
5. 10 BARNES ST. - HPL LIVES & WRITES GREAT STORIES, 1926-33.
6. HALSEY MANSION - CHARLES DEXTER WARD'S HOME (CW).
7. CATHEDRAL OF ST. JOHN (EPISC.) CHURCHYARD - FAVORITE HAUNT OF HPL & POE.
8. 135 BENEFIT ST. - "THE SHUNNED HOUSE."
9. 7 THOMAS ST. - FLEUR-DE-LYS BUILDING - WILCOX'S STUDIO (CC).
10. FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, "THE FINEST GEORGIAN STEEPLE IN AMERICA" (CC).
11. PROVIDENCE ATHENAEUM, 251 BENEFIT ST.
12. OLNEY COURT (DEMOLISHED) - SITE OF CURWEN'S HOME (CW).
13. SHAKESPEARE'S HEAD, 21 SO. COURT ST. - CURWEN SUPPORTS NEWSPAPER (CW).



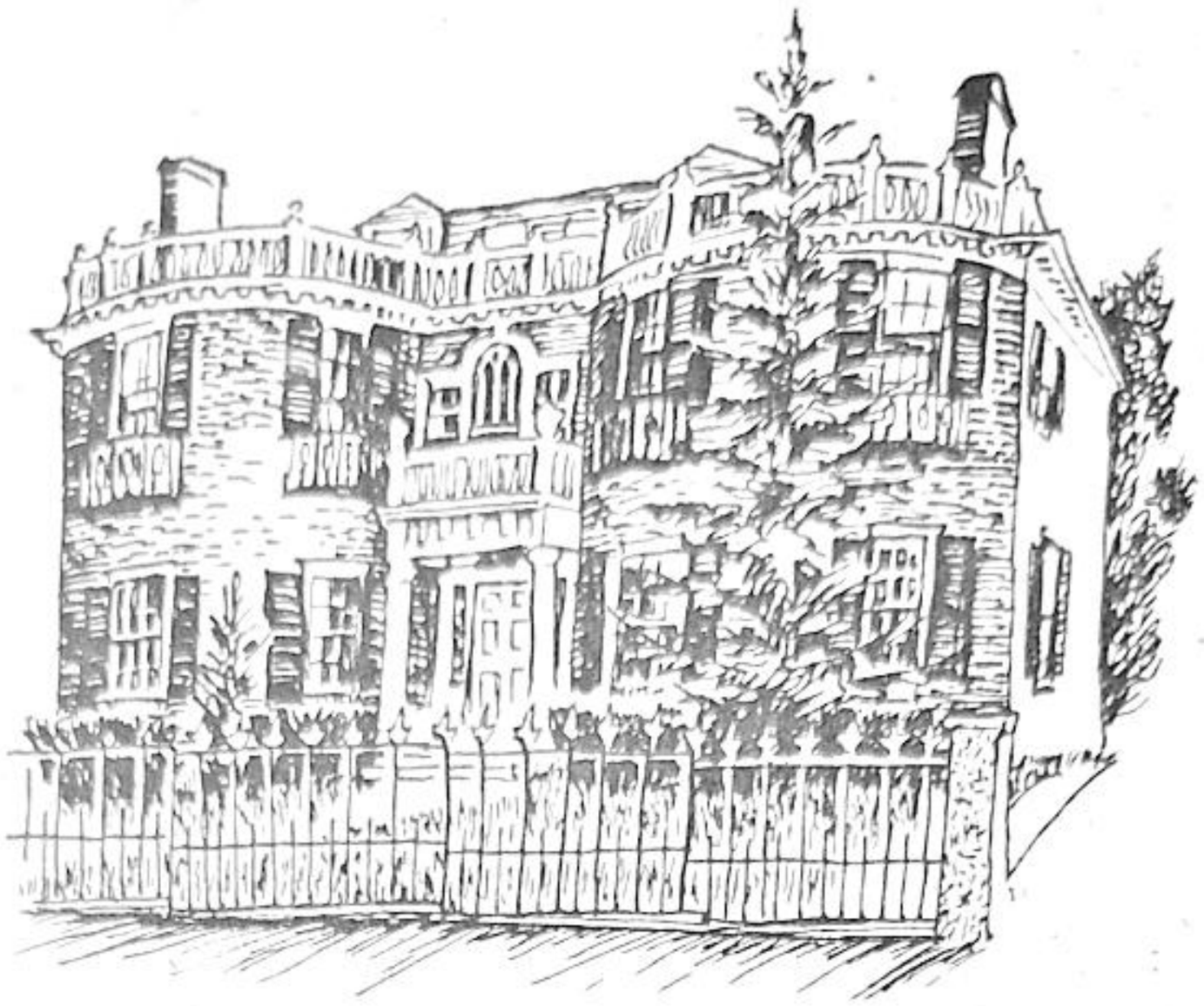
454 Angell Street (corner of Angell and Elmgrove Ave.) (demolished), home of HPL's Phillips grandparents and HPL's boyhood home- Arriving from Massachusetts in 1893; the Lovecrafts lived here until 1904, when HPL's grandfather Whipple Phillips died. Phillips had bought the house in 1893. The house was torn down in 1961. "...one of the handsomest residences in the city—to me, *the* handsomest—my own beloved birthplace! The spacious house, raised on a high green terrace, looks down upon grounds which are almost a park, with winding walks, arbours, trees, & a delightful fountain. Back of the stable is the orchard, whose fruits have delighted so many of my sad childish hours."-HPL, 1916.

598 Angell Street, HPL's home from 1904 to 1924, when he married and moved to New York for two years. "For the first time I knew what a congested, servantless house—with another family in the same house—was. There was a vacant lot next door (although even that was later built up—during my adulthood), which I promptly exploited as a landscape garden and adorned with a village of piano-box houses, but even that failed to assuage my nostalgia. I felt that I had lost my entire adjustment to the cosmos—for indeed what was HPL without the remembered rooms and hallways and hangings and staircases and statuary and paintings..." HPL,

Cathedral of St. John (Episc.), 275 North Main St.-Churchyard between Benefit and N. Main a favorite haunt of both HPL and Poe. "I have reared a marble urn to his memory in St. John's churchyard—the place that Poe loved—the hidden grove of giant willows on the hill, where tombs and headstones huddle quietly between the hoary bulk of the church and the houses and bank walls of Benefit Street."-SH



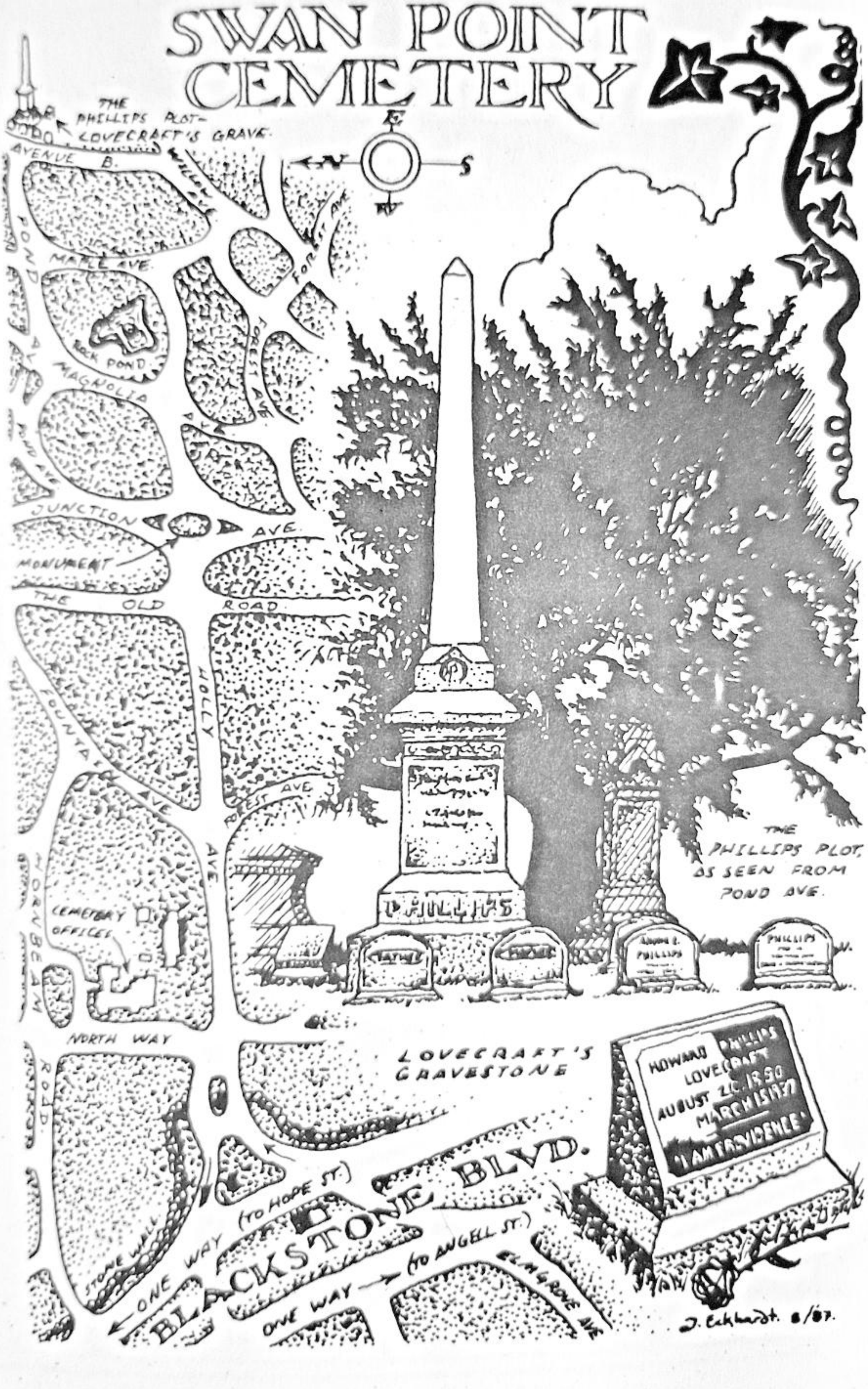
St. John's (Cath.) Church, corner of Atwells Ave. and Sutton St., Federal Hill (demolished)-basis for "Starry Wisdom Church", HD- "Of all the distant objects on Federal Hill, a certain huge, dark church most fascinated Blake. It stood out with especial distinctness at certain hours of the day, and at sunset the great tower and tapering steeple loomed blackly against the flaming sky. It seemed to rest on especially high ground; for the grimy façade, and the obliquely seen north side with sloping roof and the tops of great pointed windows, rose boldly above the tangle of surrounding ridgepoles and chimney-pots. Peculiarly grim and austere, it appeared to be built of stone, stained and weathered with the smoke and storms of a century and more."-HD



The Halsey Mansion, 140 Prospect St.-Charles Ward's home (CW).
"[Ward's] home was a great Georgian mansion atop the well-nigh precipitous hill that rises just east of the river; and from the rear windows of its rambling wings he could look dizzily out over all the clustered spires, domes, roofs, and skyscraper summits of the lower town to the purple hills of the countryside beyond. Here he was born, and from the lovely classic porch of the double-bayed brick façade his nurse had first wheeled him in his carriage..."-CW

135 Benefit Street, **"The Shunned House"**- "The house was—and for that matter still is—the kind to attract the attention of the curious. Originally a farm or semi-farm building, it followed the average New England colonial lines of the middle eighteenth century—the prosperous peaked-roof sort, with two stories and dormerless attic, and with the Georgian doorway and interior paneling dictated by the progress of taste at that time. It faced south, with one gable end buried to the lower windows in the eastward rising hill, and the other exposed to the foundations toward the street." -SH

SWAN POINT CEMETERY



CITY OF PROVIDENCE: ITS MAIN ROADS AND RIVERS

THE 'VAST MARBLE DOME' OF THE R.I. STATEHOUSE, MENTIONED IN THE CASE OF CHARLES DEXTER WARD, IS THE SECOND LARGEST UNSUPPORTED MARBLE DOME IN THE WORLD.

ROUTE 146 NORTH TO LINCOLN WOODS. A FAVORITE WALK OF LOVECRAFT'S.

ROUTE 6 WEST TO ROUTE 14, JOHNSTON, TO NEUTACONKANUT HILL, A FAVORITE WALK OF LOVECRAFT'S.

SMITH HILL

THE EAST SIDE

DOWN-TOWN

BUTLER HEALTH CENTER

SWAN POINT CEMETERY

PROVIDENCE RIVER

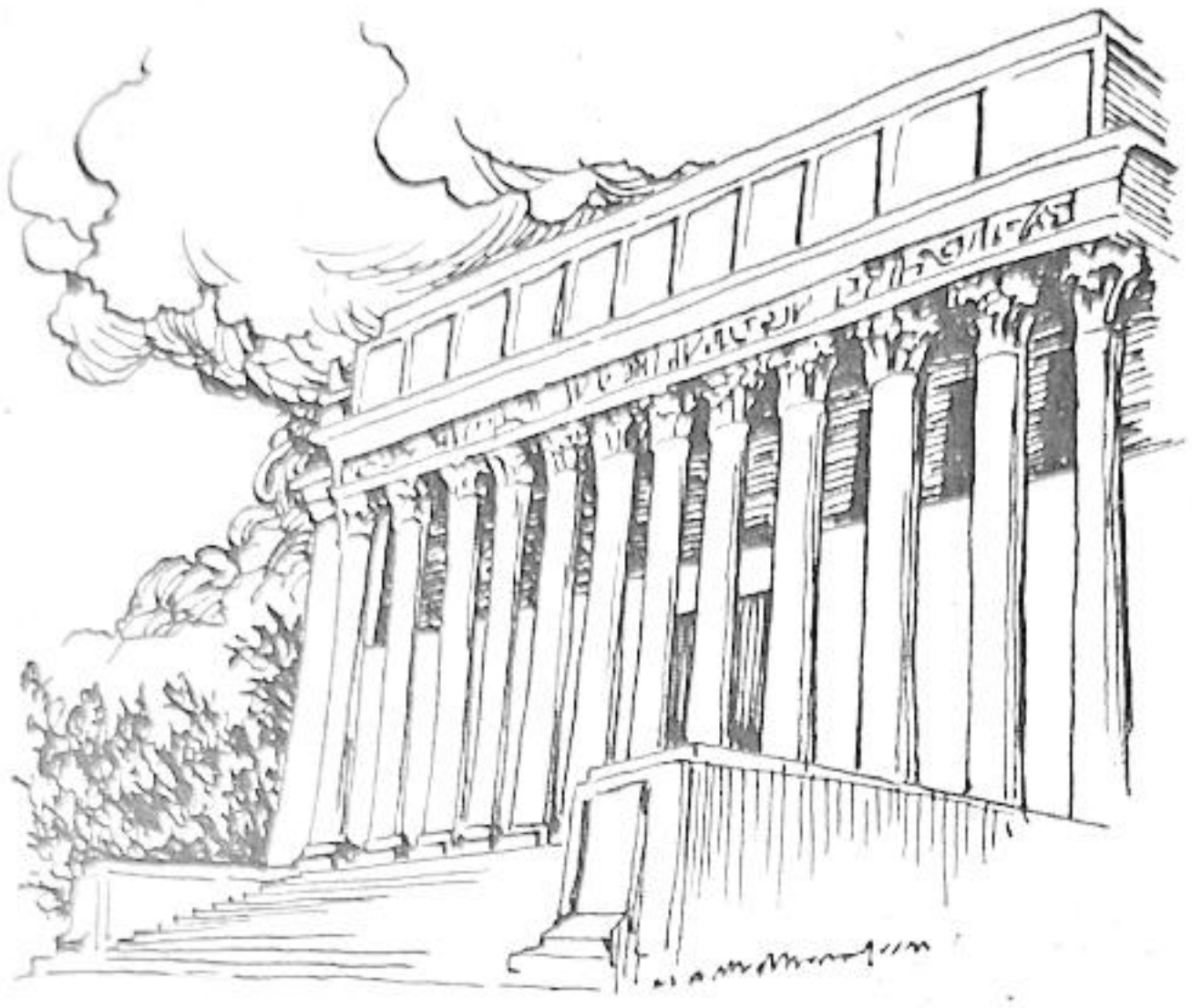
SEEKONK RIVER

EAST PROVIDENCE

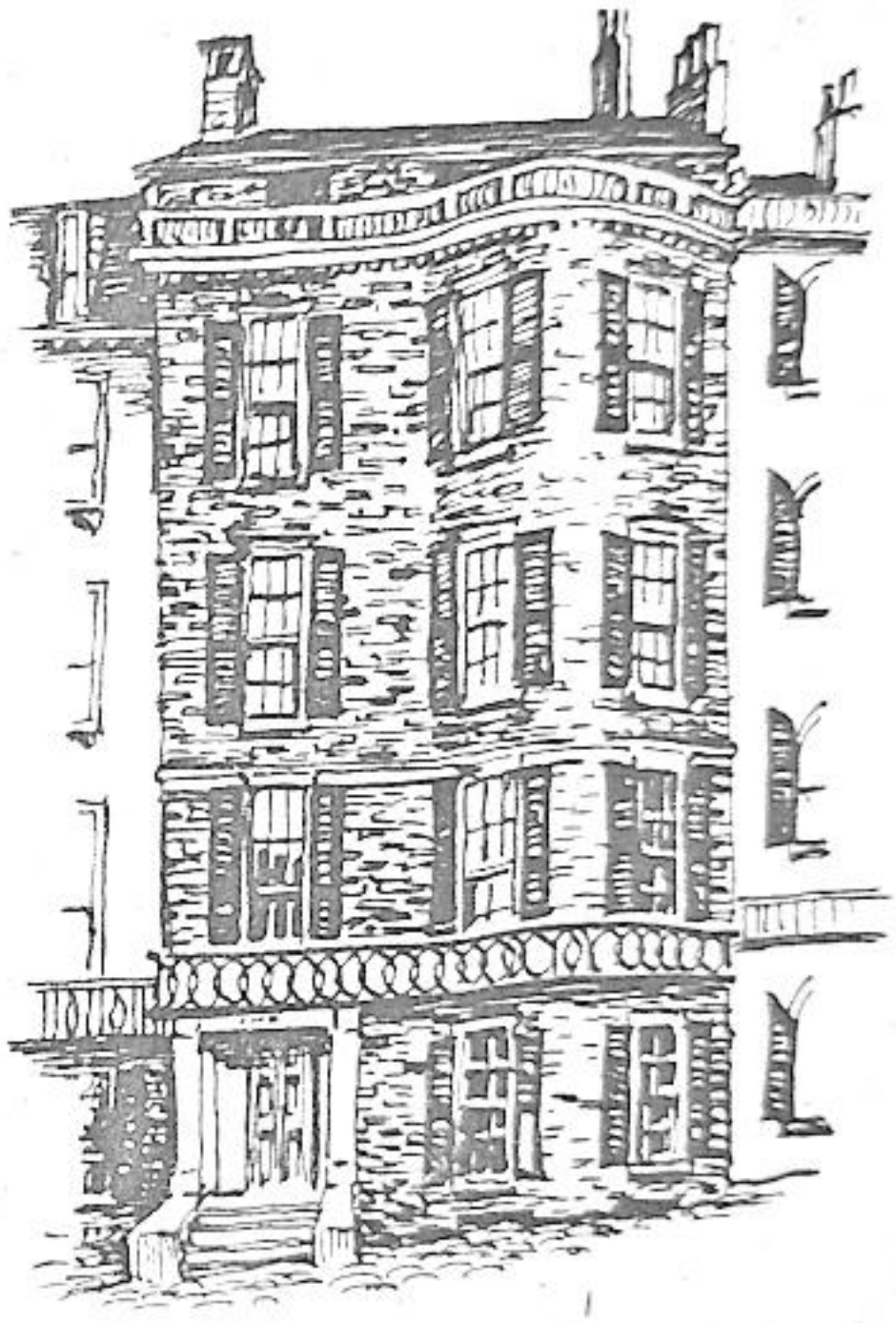
1 MILE

1. ST. JOHN'S CATHOLIC CHURCH (DEMOLISHED) - ATWELLS & SUTTON - "STARRY WISDOM" CHURCH (HD)
2. R.I. HOSPITAL, JANE BROWN WING - WHERE HPL DIED, MARCH 15, 1937.
3. COLLEGE HILL - SEE DETAIL, P. 2.
4. LADD OBSERVATORY, 210 DOYLE AVE.
5. 454 ANGELL ST. (DEMOLISHED) - HPL'S BIRTHPLACE & BOYHOOD HOME, 1890, 1893 - 1904.
6. 598 ANGELL ST. - HPL'S HOME, 1904 - 1924.
7. NORTH BURIAL GROUND - SITE OF GRAVES AND EXHUMATIONS OF EZRA WEEDEN & CURWEN (CW).
8. GRAVE OF H.P. LOVECRAFT.

Boston & Cambridge



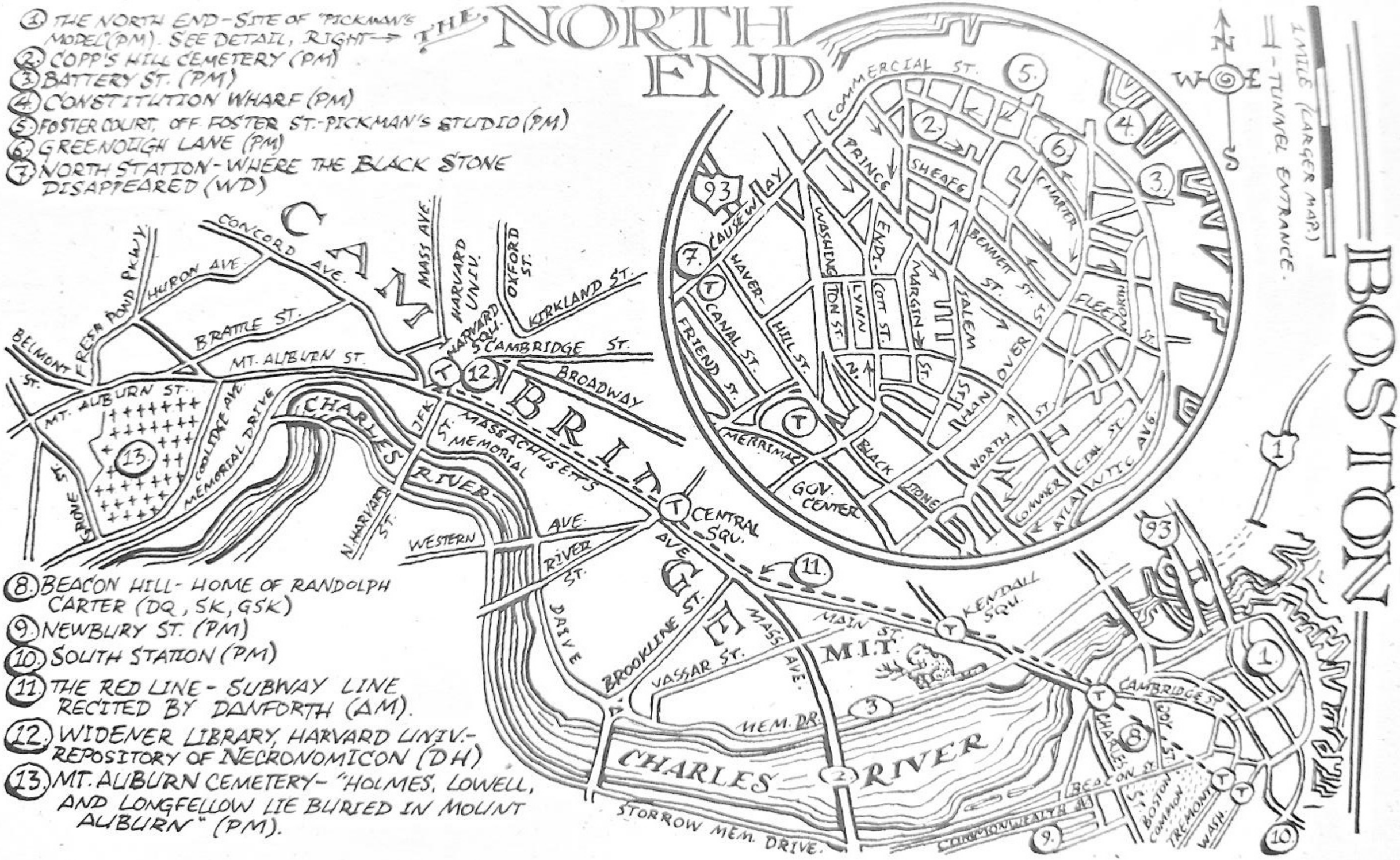
Widener Library, Harvard Univeristy, Cambridge. Both Wilbur Whateley and Charles Dexter Ward visited here to consult the *Necronomicon* (DH and CW).



Randolph Carter's home, Beacon Hill, Boston. "Onward—onward—through the screaming, cackling, and blackly populous gulfs—and then from some dim blessed distance there came an image and a thought to Randolph Carter the doomed. Too well had Nyarlathotep planned his mocking and his tantalising, for he had brought up that which no gusts of icy terror could quite efface. Home—New England—Beacon Hill—the waking world."-DQ

Foster Court, a recreation (demolished)- "When we did turn, it was to climb through the deserted length of the oldest and dirtiest alley I ever saw in my life, with crumbling-looking gables, broken small-paned windows, and archaic chimneys that stood out half-disintegrated against the moonlit sky...From that alley, which had a dim light, we turned to the left into an equally silent and still narrower alley with no light at all; and in a minute made what I think was an obtuse-angled bend toward the right in the dark."-PM

1. THE NORTH END - SITE OF PICKMAN'S MODEL (PM). SEE DETAIL, RIGHT →
2. COPP'S HILL CEMETERY (PM)
3. BATTERY ST. (PM)
4. CONSTITUTION WHARF (PM)
5. FOSTER COURT, OFF FOSTER ST. - PICKMAN'S STUDIO (PM)
6. GREENOUGH LANE (PM)
7. NORTH STATION - WHERE THE BLACK STONE DISAPPEARED (WD)

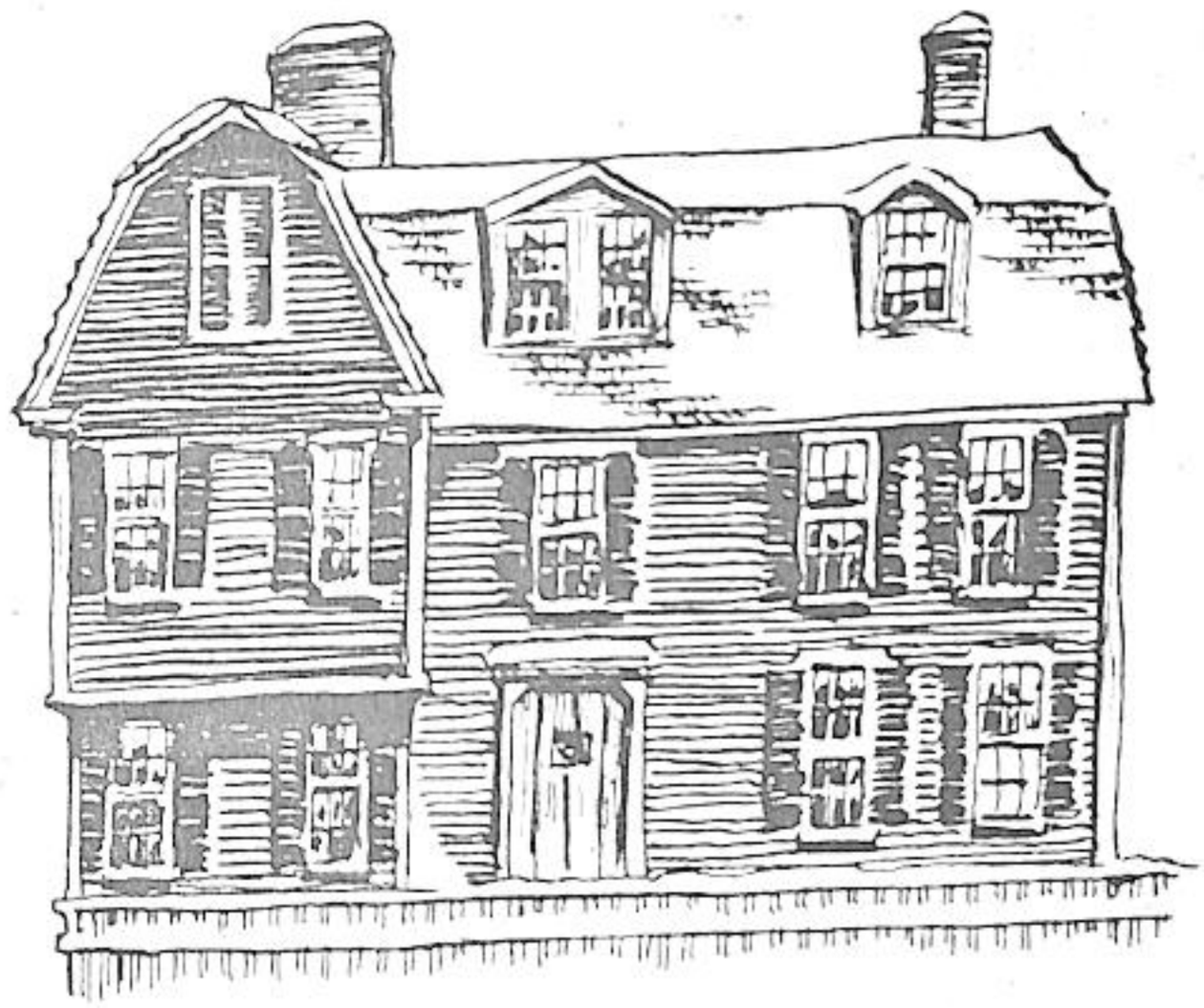


8. BEACON HILL - HOME OF RANDOLPH CARTER (DQ, SK, GSK)
9. NEWBURY ST. (PM)
10. SOUTH STATION (PM)
11. THE RED LINE - SUBWAY LINE RECITED BY DANFORTH (AM).
12. WIDENER LIBRARY, HARVARD UNIV. - REPOSITORY OF NECRONOMICON (DH)
13. MT. AUBURN CEMETERY - "HOLMES, LOWELL, AND LONGFELLOW LIE BURIED IN MOUNT AUBURN" (PM).

Marblehead

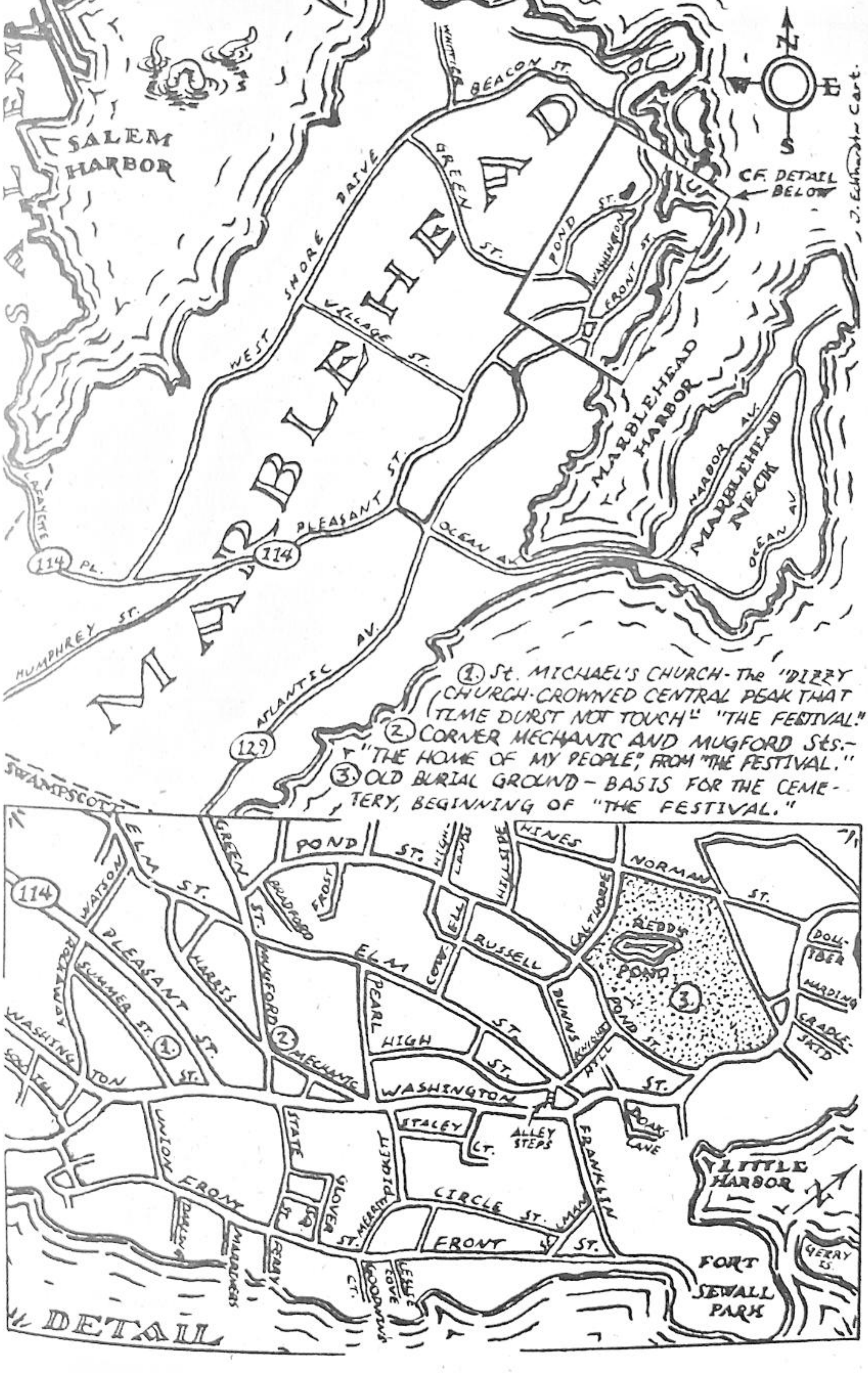
Old Burial Ground, Washington Street- "Beside the road at its crest a still higher summit rose, bleak and wind-swept, and I saw that it was a burying-ground where black gravestones stuck ghoulishly through the snow like the decayed fingernails of a gigantic corpse."-F

"The home of my people," corner Mugford and Mechanic Streets. "The upper part overhung the narrow grass-grown street and nearly met the overhanging part of the house opposite, so that I was almost in a tunnel, with the low stone doorstep wholly free from snow...Though it pleased me, I would have relished it better if there had been footprints in the snow, and people in the streets, and a few windows without drawn curtains."-F

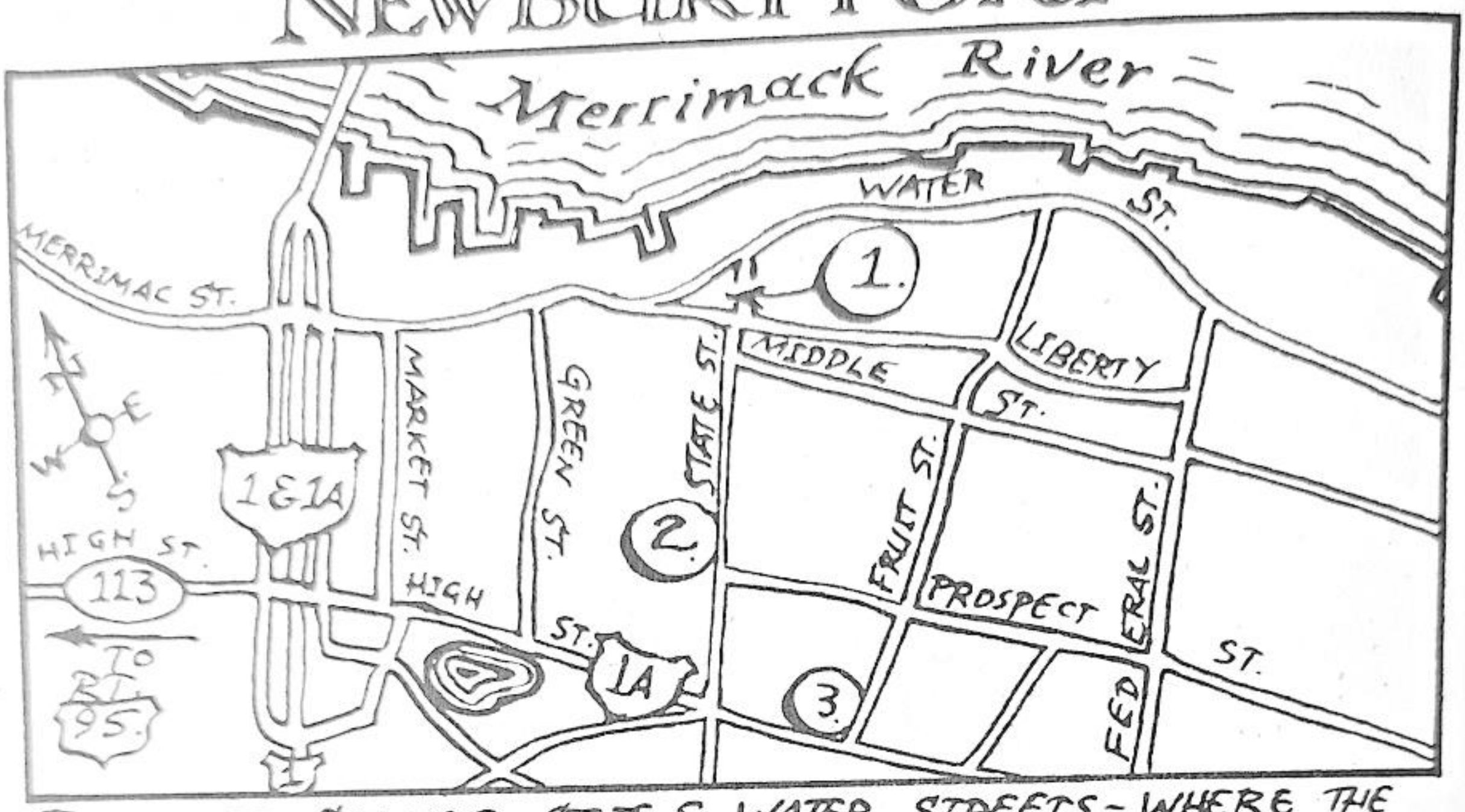


St. Michael's Church, Summer Street- "Up, up, up the eerie columns slithered, and I saw that all the travellers were converging as they flowed near a sort of focus of crazy alleys at the top of a high hill in the centre of the town, where perched a great white church. I had seen it from the road's crest when I looked at Kingsport in the new dusk, and it had made me shiver because Aldebaran had seemed to balance itself a moment on the ghostly spire."-F

MARBLEHEAD


SALEM HARBOR
BEACON ST.
WHITTIER
GREEN
PARVE
ST.
POND
WASHINGTON
FRONT ST.
CF. DETAIL BELOW
N
W
E
S
MARBLEHEAD HARBOR
HARBOR AV.
MARBLEHEAD NECK
OCEAN AV.
WEST SHORE
VILLAGE ST.
PLEASANT ST.
LAFAYETTE
114
PL.
HUMPHREY ST.
AV.
ATLANTIC
129
SWAMPSCOTT
1. ST. MICHAEL'S CHURCH - The "DIZZY CHURCH - CROWNED CENTRAL PEAK THAT TIME DURST NOT TOUCH" "THE FESTIVAL."
2. CORNER MECHANIC AND MUGFORD STS.- "THE HOME OF MY PEOPLE," FROM "THE FESTIVAL."
3. OLD BURIAL GROUND - BASIS FOR THE CEMETERY, BEGINNING OF "THE FESTIVAL."
ELM ST.
WATSON
BRADFORD
FROST
HIGH LANDS
HILLSIDE
HINES
NORMAN ST.
CALTHORPE
REDDS POND
DOLLIVER
HARDING
GRAPPLE SKID
ROCKAWAY
SUMMER ST.
HARRIS ST.
MUGFORD
PEARL
COWELL
RUSSELL
DUNN'S
HIGH ST.
MECHANIC
WASHINGTON
STALEY
ALLEY STEPS
CT.
FRANKLIN
POND ST.
LANE
LITTLE HARBOR
UNION
FRONT
STATE
GLOVER
ST. MERRIMPICKET
CIRCLE ST.
MARINERS
FERRY
GOODWINS CT.
LESLIE'S COVE
FERRY ST.
FORT SEWALL PARK
DETAIL

NEWBURYPORT

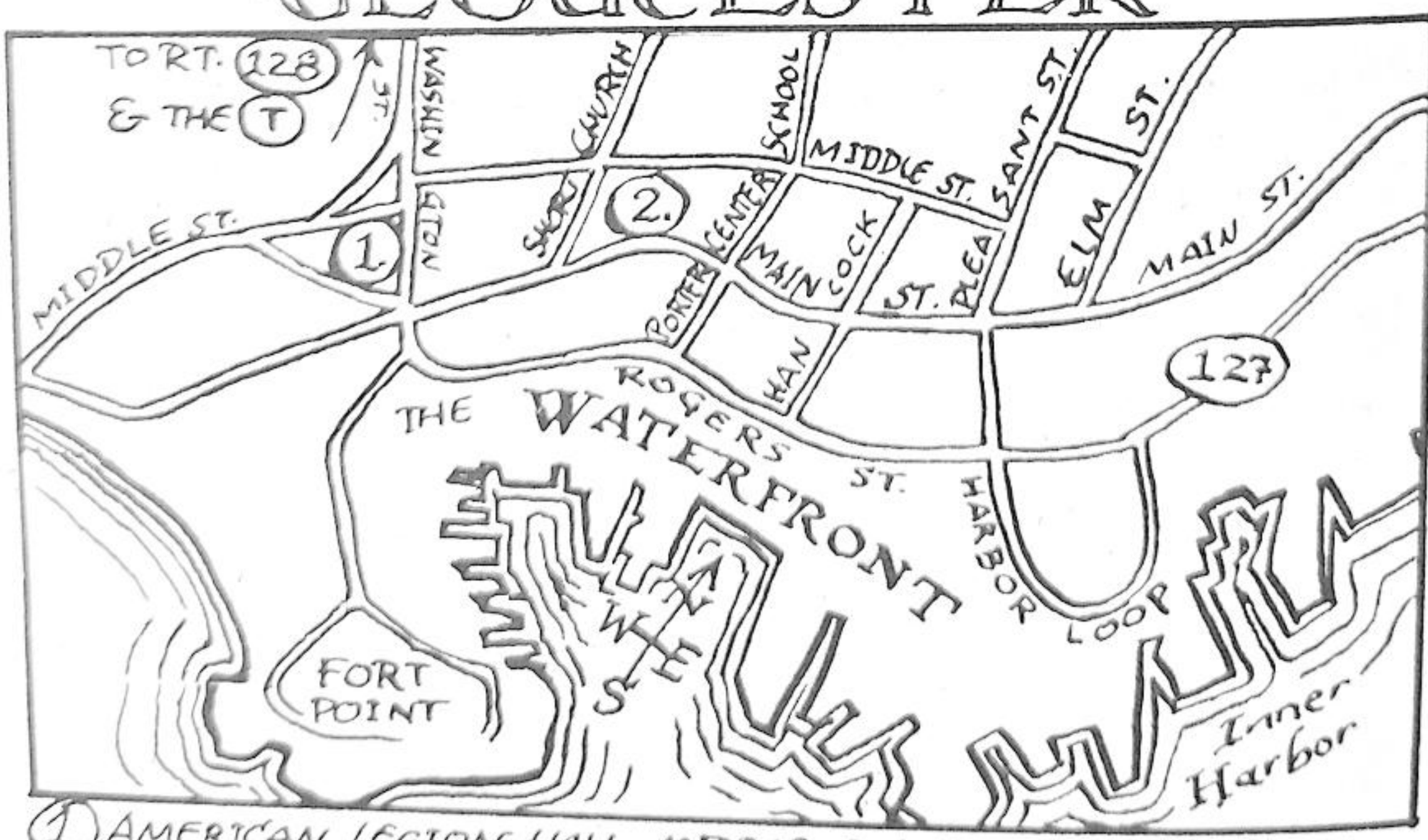


(1) MARKET SQUARE - STATE & WATER STREETS - WHERE THE NARRATOR CATCHES BUS TO INNSMOUTH (SI).

(2) NATHANIEL TRACY HOUSE/PUBLIC LIBRARY, 94 STATE ST. - WHERE NARRATOR RESEARCHES' INNSMOUTH (SI).

(3) HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF OLD NEWBURY, 98 HIGH ST. - WHERE NARRATOR VIEWS DEEP ONES' JEWELRY.

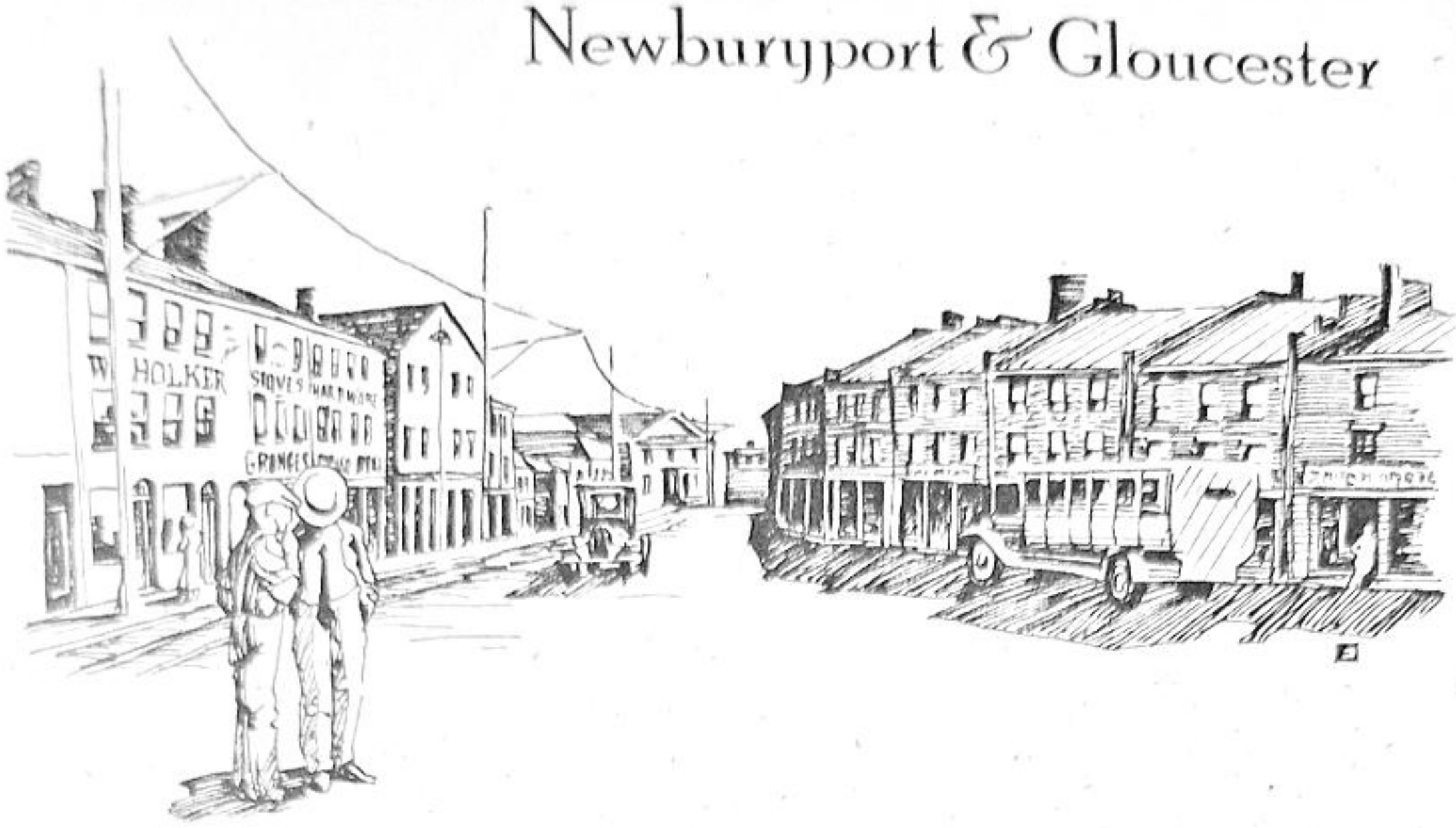
GLOUCESTER



(1) AMERICAN LEGION HALL, MIDDLE & WASHINGTON STREETS - POSSIBLE BASIS FOR "ESOTERIC ORDER OF DAGON" HALL, SI.

(2) SARGENT-HOUSE MUSEUM, 49 MIDDLE ST. - ORIGINALLY SARGENT-MURRAY-GILMAN-HOLIGH HOUSE, VISITED BY HPL, 1927 - "SARGENT" AND "GILMAN" USED IN SI.

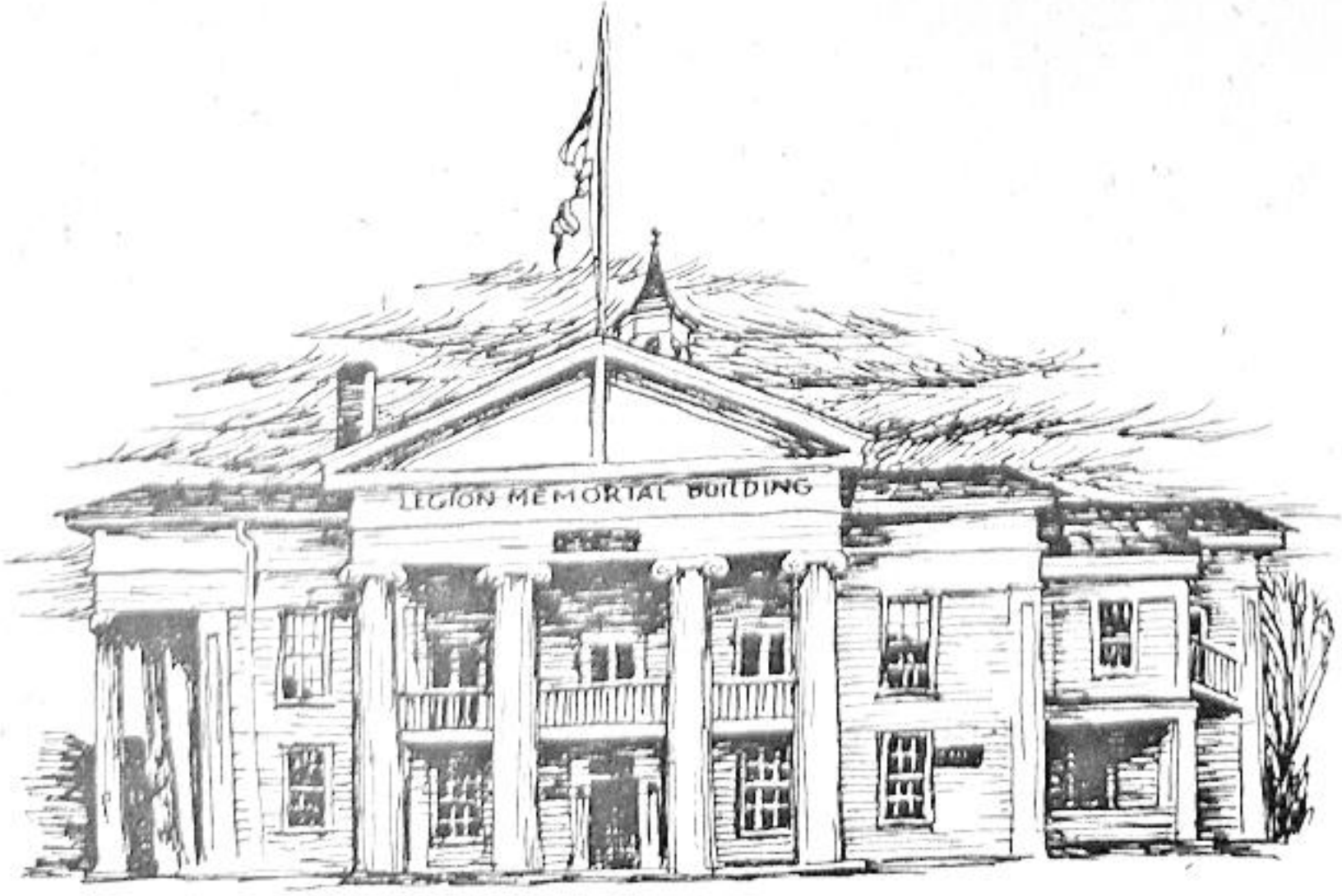
Newburyport & Gloucester



Market Square, Newburyport, ca. 1930-"Shortly before ten the next morning I stood with one small valise in front of Hammond's Drug Store in old Market Square waiting for the Innsmouth bus."-SI

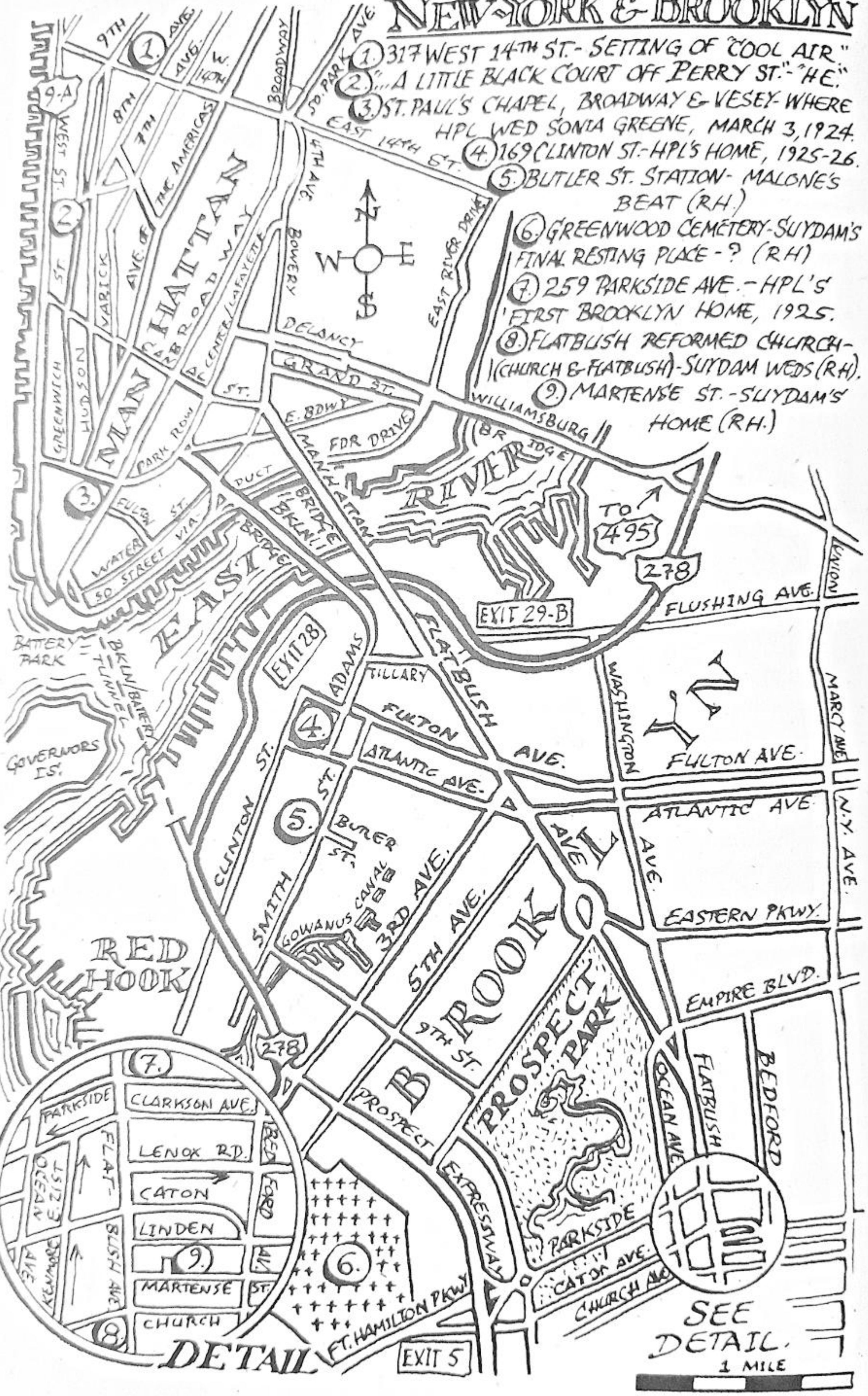
Also, "One side of the cobblestoned open space [in Innsmouth] was the straight line of the river; the other was a semicircle of slant-roofed brick buildings of about the 1800 period, from which several streets radiated away to the southeast, south, and southwest."-SI

American Legion Hall, Middle & Washington Streets, Gloucester-"...I was looking at a large pillared hall on the right-hand junction ahead. The structure's once white paint was now grey and peeling, and the black and gold sign on the pediment was so faded that I could only with difficulty make out the words 'Esoteric Order of Dagon.' This, then, was the former Masonic Hall now given over to a degraded cult."-SI

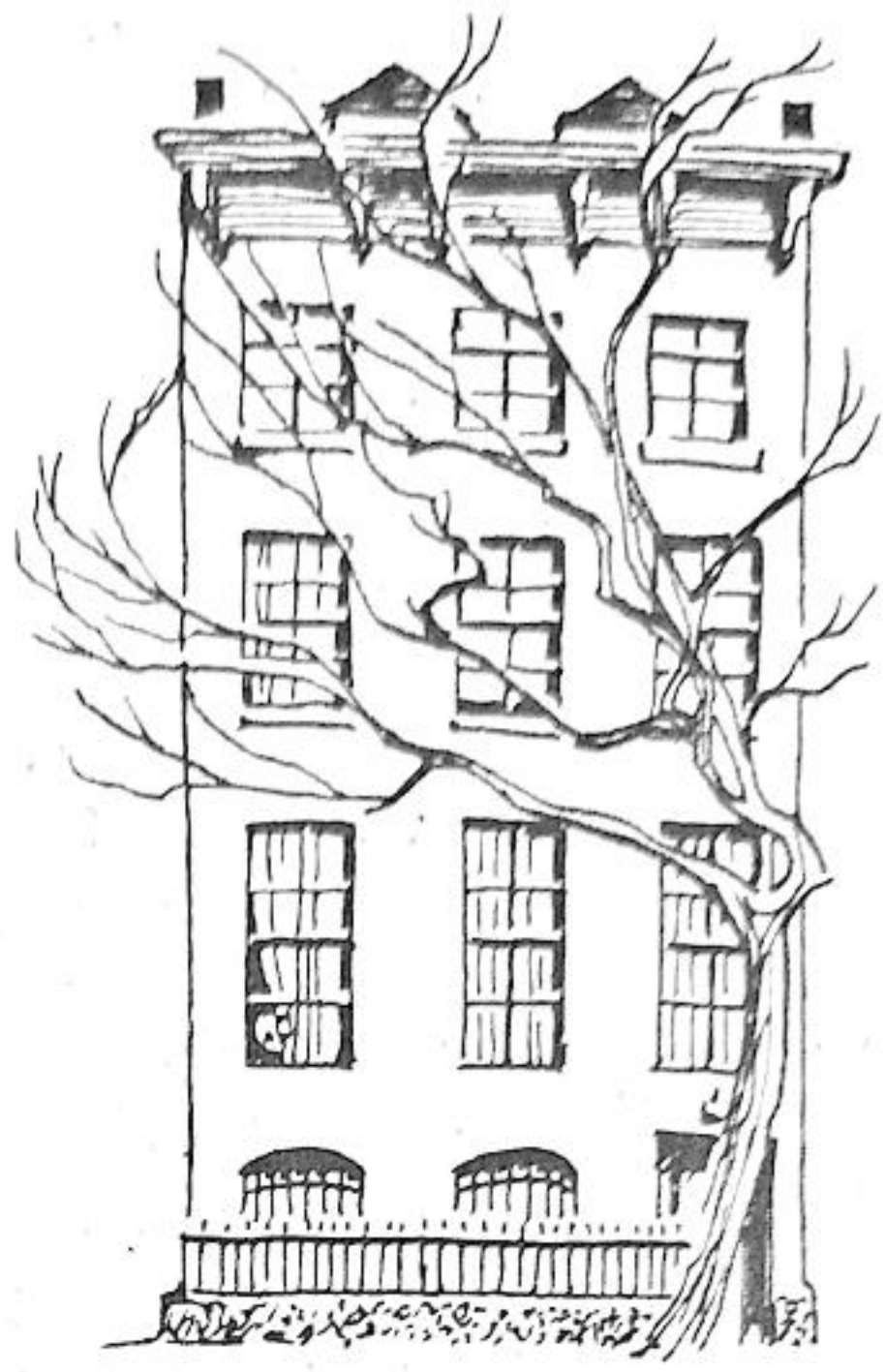


NEW YORK & BROOKLYN

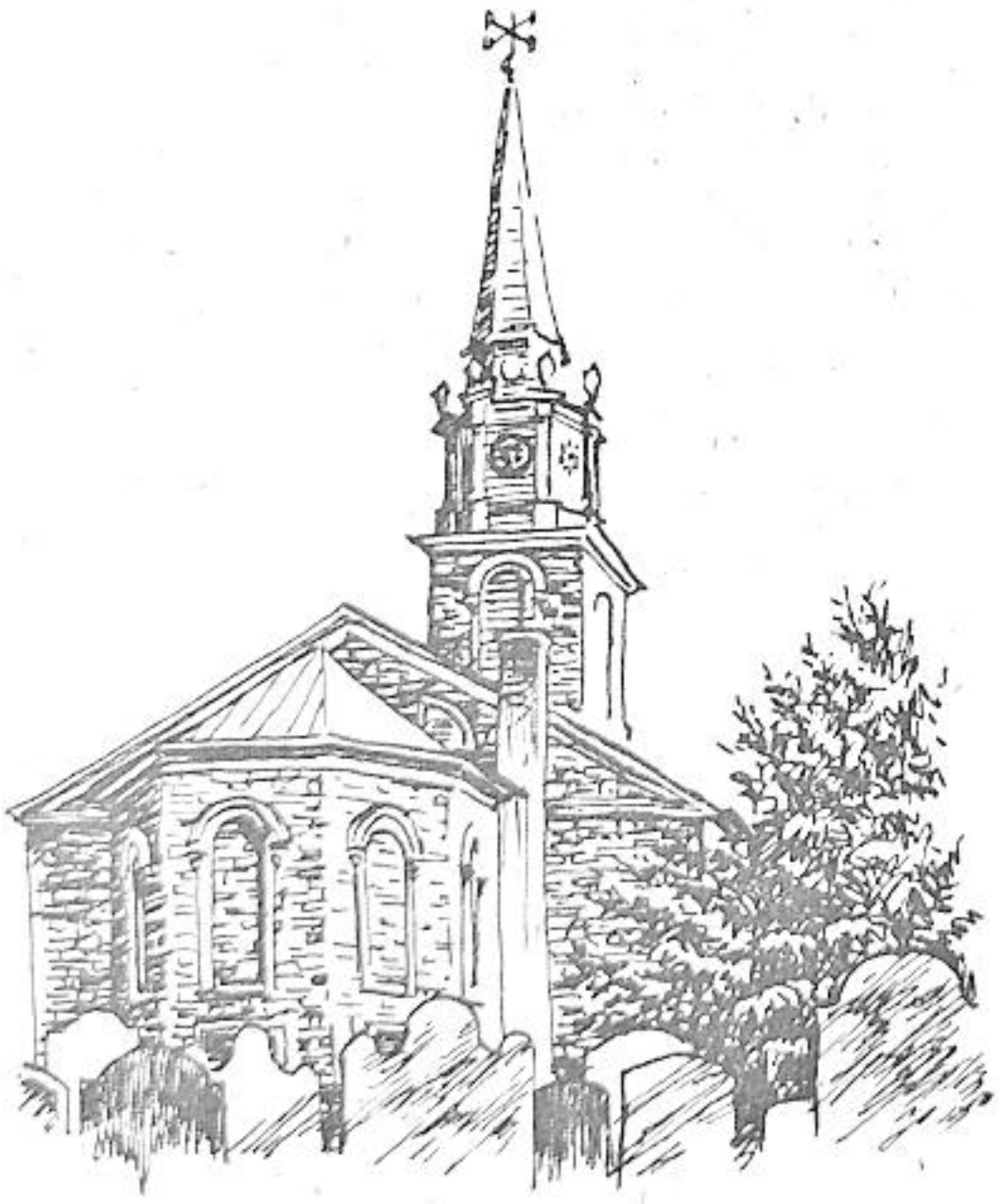
1. 317 WEST 14TH ST. - SETTING OF "COOL AIR."
2. "...A LITTLE BLACK COURT OFF PERRY ST." - "HE."
3. ST. PAUL'S CHAPEL, BROADWAY & VESEY - WHERE HPL WED SONIA GREENE, MARCH 3, 1924.
4. 169 CLINTON ST. - HPL'S HOME, 1925-26.
5. BUTLER ST. STATION - MALONE'S BEAT (R.H.)
6. GREENWOOD CEMETERY - SUYDAM'S FINAL RESTING PLACE - ? (R.H.)
7. 259 PARKSIDE AVE. - HPL'S 'FIRST BROOKLYN HOME, 1925.
8. FLATBUSH REFORMED CHURCH - (CHURCH & FLATBUSH) - SUYDAM WEDS (R.H.).
9. MARTENSE ST. - SUYDAM'S HOME (R.H.)



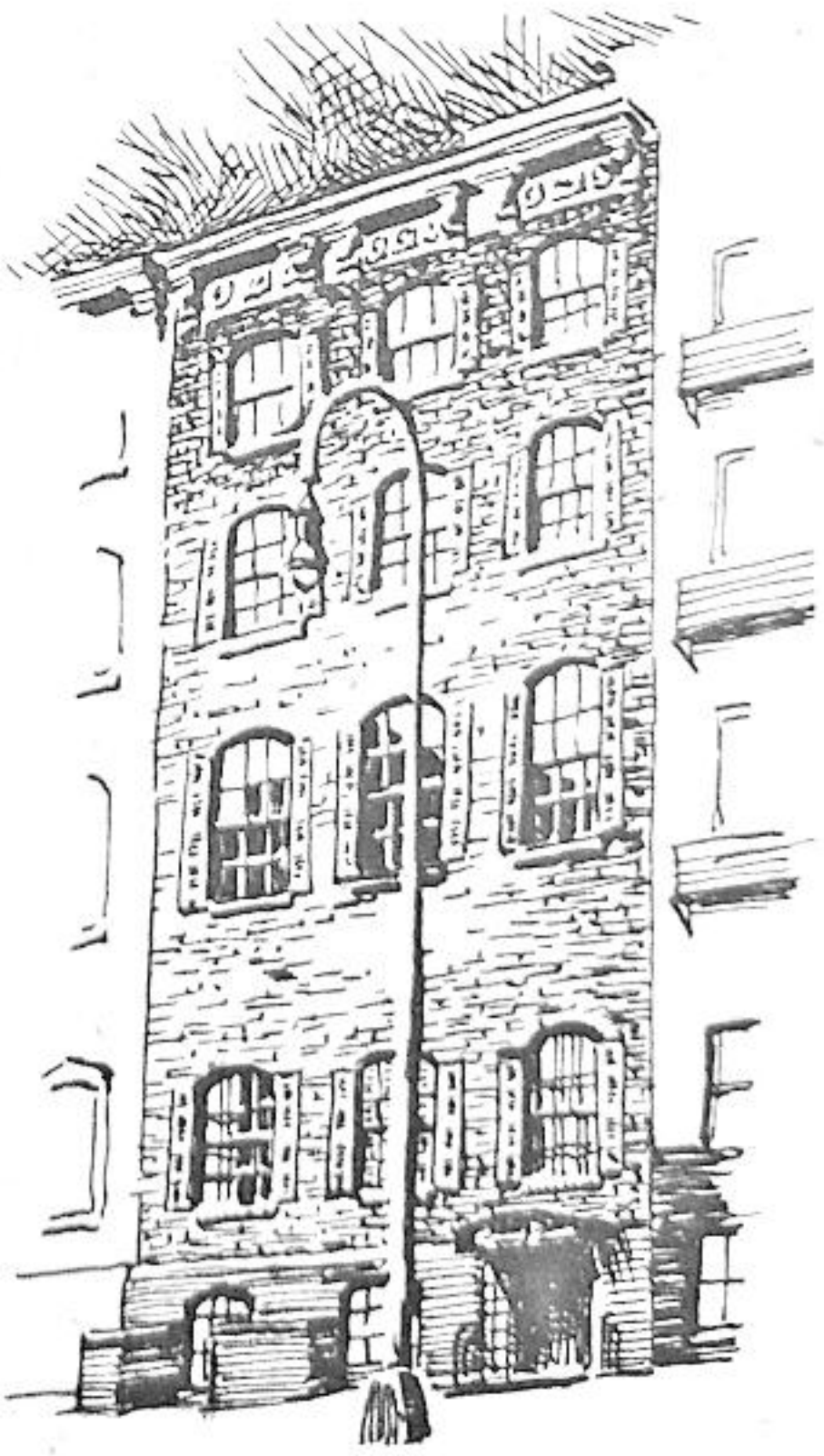
New York & Brooklyn



169 Clinton St., Brooklyn, HPL's home, 1924-26. "I wanted him to make his home with me out of town where I earned our living, but he said he hated to live in a mid-western town, that he would prefer to remain in New York, at least where he had some friends. (He hated making new friends, but when once made he was loyal.) Thus came the decision for the Clinton St. address which at first he seemed to love. He admired the anciency and quaintness of that part of Brooklyn..."-Sonia H. Davis,



Flatbush Reformed Church, Brooklyn, Church and Flatbush Avenues, Brooklyn-"...the steepled and ivy-clad Reformed Church with its iron-railed yard of netherlandish gravestones."-RH



317 West 14th St., NY, "Cool Air" setting.. "The place was a four-story mansion of brownstone, dating apparently from the late forties, and fitted with wood-work and marble whose stained and sullied splendour argued a descent from high levels of tasteful opulence."-CA

MASSACHUSETTS & ENVIRONS

NEW YORK

VERMONT

NEW HAMPSHIRE

CONNECTICUT

MASS

RHODE ISLAND

N.Y.

W — E

S

16 MI

TOWNSHEND WD

BRATTLEBORO WD

OKEENE WD

TO PORTSMOUTH, NH, SACO, PORTLAND & CHESUNCOOK, ME.

DETAIL

NEW SALEM

PETERSHAM

PRESCOTT PENINSULA - CONSERVATION LAND.

GATE 40 - TRAIL ACCESS TO DANA COMMON.

CS

202

32A

32

9

91

2

CONNECTICUT RIVER

ATHOL DH

GARDNER

FITCHBURG WD

"THE MOHAWK TRAIL"

NEW SALEM CS

202

32A

32

202

The Quabbin Reservoir - see DETAIL.

WORCESTER

"THE MASS. PIKE"

I-90

WILBRAHAM

DH

MONSON

84

395

HOUSATONIC R.

SPRINGFIELD

TO HARTFORD, NEW YORK CITY & POINTS SOUTH

LOWELL

495

93

HAVERHILL

I-95

NEWBURYPORT - "INNSMOUTH"

I

DANVERS A

128

114

GLOUCESTER I

SALEM A

MARBLEHEAD - "KINGSPORT"

MASSACHUSETTS BAY

BOLTON HWO

190

290

2

95/128

BOSTON

2

1

93

CANTON ST

I-95

3

24

TO CAPE COD

495

PROVIDENCE

6

FOSTER - HOME OF HPL'S PHILLIPS ANCESTORS.

TO N.Y.C.

I-95

"All told, there is little doubt but that Massachusetts is the really finest and most civilised state in the Union" - HPL, 1927

ECKHARDT ME·FECIT·'31

KEY

— SECONDARY ROAD

═ HIGHWAY

• TOWN/CITY

★ - STATE CAPITAL

(I) - INNSMOUTH SITES

(DH) - DUNWICH COUNTRY

CS - "COLOUR OUT OF SPACE" COUNTRY

(A) - POSSIBLE BASIS FOR ARKHAM

(1.) AUBURNDALE - HPL'S HOME, 1892-93.

(2.) DORCHESTER - HPL'S HOME, 1890-92.

JASON C. ECKHARDT